REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 13 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Murata in view of Shibazaki and Kawagoe. Claims 1 and 13 are independent. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons. In particular, even assuming *arguendo* proper, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed combination does not disclose or suggest a latch circuit in which a switch signal is held in combination with the other features recited in the pending claims. One exemplary embodiment of the second latch circuit is exemplified as reference numeral 7c in Fig. 2. According to one aspect of the present invention, the plural latch circuit arrangement enables having the capability to efficiently control timings of signal transmission and reception to each chip. Turning to the cited prior art, the Examiner relies solely on Shibazaki for disclosing a latch circuit. However, the alleged latch circuit of Shibazaki is relied on only for allegedly disclosing holding of signals to and from the units to adjust timings, but not for holding a switch signal. Indeed, Shibazaki appears silent as to a latch circuit in which a switch signal is held, let alone suggest such a feature in the particular combination recited in the pending claims.

The Examiner is directed to MPEP § 2143.03 under the section entitled "All Claim Limitations Must Be Taught or Suggested", which sets forth the applicable standard:

> To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. (citing *In re Royka*, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974)).

In the instant case, the pending rejection does not "establish *prima facie* obviousness of [the] claimed invention" as recited in claims 1 and 13 because the proposed combination fails the "all the claim limitations" standard required under § 103.

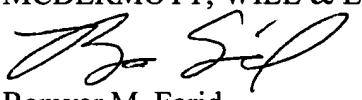
Under Federal Circuit guidelines, a dependent claim is nonobvious if the independent claim upon which it depends is allowable because all the limitations of the independent claim are

contained in the dependent claims, *Hartness International Inc. v. Simplimatic Engineering Co.*, 819F.2d at 1100, 1108 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Accordingly, as claims 1 and 13 are patentable for the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims dependent thereon are also patentable. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are patentable based on their own merits by adding novel and non-obvious features to the combination. Based on all the foregoing, it is submitted that the pending claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below. To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
MCDERMOTT, WILL & EMERY



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